

Amendments to the Claims:

A listing of the entire set of pending claims (including amendments to the claims, if any) is submitted herewith per 37 CFR 1.121. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of hot-filling and capping with a closure a polymer container, the container defining a head space area above a level of liquid in the filled container, comprising:

providing one of the closure and the head space area of the container with a hole opening into the container;

~~covered~~ applying a with hydrophobic air permeable membrane to an inner surface of one of the closure and head space area so as to cover the hole;

filling the container with hot liquid;

applying the closure to the filled container;

allowing the filled container to cool; and

thereafter applying an air tight seal over the membrane-covered hole.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein hydrophobic air permeable membrane comprises expanded polytetrafluoro-ethylene, the seal terminating flush with an outer surfaces of one of the closure and head space area and being coupled to the air permeable membrane.

3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein hydrophobic air permeable membrane comprises polypropylene .

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.3 to 5 microns.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about

0.4 to 2 microns.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.5 to 1.5 microns.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the membrane has pores having an average of about 1.0 micron.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the hole is sized between about 50 and 100 microns.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the seal comprises a dryable coating.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the dryable coating comprises a UV activated sealant.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the dryable coating comprises a paint.

12. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the seal comprises a semi-transparent adhesive.

13. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the seal comprises an air tight membrane with a pressure-sensitive adhesive on one surface thereof.

14. (original) The method of claim wherein the seal comprises a composition which solidifies upon exposure to actinic radiation.

15. (currently amended) A closure cap adapted to be applied to a hot-fill container comprising:

a body having outer and inner surfaces ~~top surface having an outer edge with a skirt portion depending therefrom, the top surface defining~~ and a hole therethrough opening into the outer and inner surfaces of the body;

a hydrophobic, air permeable membrane secured to the inner surface ~~cap~~ so as to cover the hole; and

an air-impermeable sealing material irremovably contained within ~~and filling~~ the hole to provide an air-tight seal over the portion of the air permeable membrane covering the hole, wherein the air-tight seal is essentially flush with the ~~top~~ outer surface.

16. (currently amended) The closure cap of claim 15 in which the hydrophobic air permeable membrane is secured to the inside surface of the top and further comprises a liner applied to the ~~inside~~ inner surface of the cap, the liner having ~~a hole~~ an opening in registration with the hole ~~in the top surface~~ and overlying the hydrophobic air permeable membrane.

17.(original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein hydrophobic air permeable membrane comprises expanded polytetraflouro-ethylene.

18. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein hydrophobic air permeable membrane comprises polypropylene.

19. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.3 to 5 microns.

20. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.4 to 2 microns.

21. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.5 to 1.5 microns.

22. (original)The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the membrane has pores having an

average of about 1.0 micron.

23. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the hole is sized between about 50 and 100 microns.

24. (original) The closure of claim 15 wherein the seal comprises a dryable coating.

25. (original) The closure of claim 15 wherein the dryable coating comprises a UV activated sealant.

26. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the dryable coating comprises a paint.

27. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the seal comprises a semi-transparent adhesive.

28. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the seal comprises an air tight membrane with a pressure-sensitive adhesive on one surface thereof.

29. (original) The closure cap of claim 15 wherein the seal comprises a composition which solidifies upon exposure to actinic radiation.

30. (currently amended) A hot-fill container ~~with a shoulder portion defining~~ having a head space substance-free area, above a level to which the container is to be filled with liquid, the head space area defining an opening to fill the container and a hole on the shoulder portion of the container above the level to which the container is to be filled with liquid the container comprising:

a body fillable with a substance below the head space area and heated at an above ambient first temperature;

a closure capping the heated body, at least one of the closure and body having a through-going hole opening at inner and outer ends thereof into respective inner and outer surfaces of the least one of the closure and body;

a hydrophobic air permeable membrane secured to ~~the container so as to cover the hole on the shoulder portions~~ the inner surface and closing the inner end of the hole; and
an air tight seal ~~located within the hole and over the portion of the membrane covering~~ closing the outer end of the hole upon cooling the body to an ambient temperature lower than the first temperature.

31.(currently amended) The container of claim 30 wherein ~~hydrophobic air permeable membrane comprises expanded polytetraflouro-ethylene~~ the air tight seal extends from the air permeable membrane within the hole and terminates flush with the outer surface of the closure.

32. (currently amended) The container of claim 30 wherein hydrophobic air permeable membrane comprises polypropylene or expanded polytetraflouro-ethylene.

33. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.3 to 5 microns.

34. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.4 to 2 microns.

35. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores sized from about 0.5 to 1.5 microns.

36. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the membrane has pores having an average of about 1.0 micron.

37. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the hole is sized between about 50 and 100 microns.

38. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises a dryable coating.

39. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the dryable coating comprises a UV activated sealant.

40. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the dryable coating comprises a paint.

41. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises a semi-transparent adhesive.

42. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises an air tight membrane with a pressure-sensitive adhesive on one surface thereof.

43. (original) The container of claim 30 wherein the seal comprises a composition which solidifies upon exposure to actinic radiation.

44. – 57. (canceled)

58. (new) The container of claim 30, wherein the air tight seal extends atop the outer surface of the closure and covers the outer end of the hole.

59. (new) The container of claim 30, wherein the hole extends through the body and is spaced from the closure, the air tight seal being supported by the air permeable membrane and extending therefrom within the hole so as to terminate flush with the outer surface of the body.